DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 344 CE 077 745

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|---|---|
| TITLE | Progress of Operating Agencies in Implementing "High Skills, High Wages," Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education. A Report to the Legislature. July 1996-June 1997. |
| INSTITUTION | Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Olympia. |
| PUB DATE | 1997-06-00 |
| NOTE | 27p.; For 1995-1996 report, see ED 413 519; for 1997-1998 report, see CE 077 746. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Descriptive (141) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC02 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Education Work Relationship; *Educational Planning; Employer Attitudes; Employment Patterns; Employment Projections; Futures (of Society); *Job Skills; Job Training; *Labor Force Development; Labor Needs; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; *Statewide Planning; *Vocational Education |
| IDENTIFIERS | *Washington |

ABSTRACT

During 1996-97, state agencies in Washington worked to implement the state's High Skills, High Wages Plan for Workforce Training and Education, focusing on seven most urgently needed actions to ensure that the people of the state succeed in an economy that requires ever higher levels of skill and knowledge. The seven actions are the following: (1) implement continuous improvement throughout the workforce training and education system; (2) increase capacity of the work force training and education system; (3) implement school-to-work transition; (4) vertically integrate the workforce training and education system; (5) increase public awareness of workforce training and education issues and initiatives; (6) make welfare reform work; and (7) connect workforce training and education with economic development. During the 1997 fiscal year (July 1996-June 1997), progress was made toward those goals, in cooperation with private sector partners and other state agencies. Much work remained to be done, however, with the biggest challenges for the next year expected to include continued work to establish a school-to-work transition system for high school students; infusing the performance management for continuous improvement system throughout the agencies and programs of the workforce development system; and vertically integrating the elements of the workforce training and education system to meet the needs of employers, workers, and the economy for workforce training. (KC)

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ED 425 344

A Report to the Legislature

Progress of Operating Agencies in Implementing

# *High Skills, High Wages*

Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education

July 1996–June 1997

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## WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

### The Vision

*Washington's valued and trusted source of leadership for the workforce training and education system*

### Mission Statement

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's mission is to bring business, labor, and the public sector together to shape strategies to best meet the workforce training needs of all of Washington's students, workers, and employers in order to create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy.

To fulfill this mission, Board members and staff work together to:

- Advise the Governor and Legislature on workforce training and education policy.
- Promote a system of workforce training and education that responds to the lifelong learning needs of the current and future workforce.
- Advocate for the nonbaccalaureate training and education needs of workers and employers.
- Facilitate innovations in policy.
- Ensure system quality and accountability by evaluating results and supporting high standards and continuous improvement.

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*This publication is available in alternative format upon request.*

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

*Building 17, Airdustrial Park, P.O. Box 43105 • Olympia, Washington 98504-3105 • (360) 753-5662 • FAX (360) 586-5862*

December 1, 1997

Members of the Legislature:

I am pleased to submit the third annual report of progress made by state agencies in fulfilling the most urgently needed actions and recommendations of "High Skills, High Wages: Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education."

We revised "High Skills, High Wages" in November 1996 to sharpen the focus on where change is most needed. The plan contains an ambitious agenda for change at all levels of the workforce training and education system. It calls for a transformation by establishing accountability through continuous quality improvement, continuing progress in education reform, expanding the capacity in the workforce training and education system, making welfare reform work, and connecting workforce training with economic development.

Progress has been made during the past year by the agencies committed to this agenda of change - the Employment Security Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. Much of this progress depended on cooperation with our private sector partners and with other agencies of state government.

Much work, however, remains to be done. We anticipate the biggest challenges for the coming year will include continued work to establish a School-to-Work Transition system for high school students, infusing the Performance Management for Continuous Improvement system throughout the agencies and programs of the workforce development system, and vertically integrating the elements of the workforce training and education system to meet the needs of employers, workers, and the economy for workforce training.

We appreciate your continued confidence in our collective ability to implement "High Skills, High Wages" and look forward to updating the plan and reporting continued progress in future years.

Sincerely,

Betty Jane Narver

Betty Jane Narver, Chair
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

cc: Governor Gary Locke

A Report to the Legislature

# Progress of Operating Agencies in Implementing

# *High Skills, High Wages*

## Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education

July 1996–June 1997

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# INTRODUCTION

*In November 1996, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) revised "High Skills, High Wages: Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education" and submitted the plan to Governor Lowry and the Legislature. The plan identified seven "most urgently needed actions" and other recommendations to ensure that the people of Washington State succeed in an economy that requires ever higher levels of skill and knowledge.*

*This report fulfills the mandate of RCW 28C.18.080 (3) and (5). The law requires the state agencies represented on the Board to develop operating plans that are consistent with "High Skills, High Wages." It requires WTECB to provide a report by December 1 each year to appropriate legislative committees of agencies' implementation of the comprehensive plan.*

*This is the Board's third annual report to the Legislature. It covers fiscal year 1997, July 1996 to June 1997.*

*Besides the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, the material covered in this report is from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and the Employment Security Department. These agencies are responsible for managing programs of the workforce training and education system: vocational training at high schools; vocational preparation, retraining, and adult basic education at community and technical colleges; programs for disadvantaged adults; programs for at-risk youth; retraining for dislocated workers; school-to-work transition; and customized training.*

## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 1: Implement Continuous Improvement Throughout the Workforce Training and Education System

### The Needed Action

***The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) and the other agencies and partners of the workforce training and education system will implement Performance Management for Continuous Improvement throughout the workforce development system.*** *Within two years, all workforce training and education programs will have formal continuous improvement systems in place.*

The Performance Management for Continuous Improvement system guides improvements in the workforce training and education system. It soon will provide customers with information needed to use the system, and it will inform policymakers and the public about performance of the system. The system's policy framework and seven goals for the workforce development system were approved in early 1996 by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Employment Security Department, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, and Department of Social and Health Services.

### Workforce Improvement

WTECB adopted the interagency Workforce Improvement Team's recommendations in January 1997. The recommendations call for the Board to be an advocate and resource for continuous quality improvement efforts in the state's workforce training and education system, and to provide guidance for agencies' continuous quality improvement plans. The team also recommended each agency develop an improvement plan.

### Agency Quality Improvement

WTECB completed its plan for Governor Locke's quality improvement initiative, framing the agency's work for the coming year. In the fall of 1997, the Board will conduct a self-assessment in the area of quality improvement as part of its continuous quality improvement efforts.

The Employment Security Department completed its quality improvement plan and developed the capacity to train staff in continuous quality improvement. Training will provide staff with tools for measuring and improving agency operations.

### Program Quality Improvement

The Employment Security Department began further analysis of the net impact study of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) program, which serves economically disadvantaged adults and youth, to identify additional areas for improving local services. The local JTPA service

delivery area partners and WTECB are assisting with this work. Additionally, the State Job Training Coordinating Council, Service Delivery Area Administrators' Association, and Employment Security Department will explore continuous improvement in the JTPA service delivery system through a performance review during the coming year.

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) analyzed the colleges' results related to the seven performance goals for the workforce development system. It concluded the colleges are doing well in:

- Preparing students for the workforce, and for transition to and success at four-year institutions.
- Providing instruction and support services that are satisfactory to most students.
- Providing access to postsecondary education for African American, Native American, and Asian American students.

SBCTC also concluded the colleges need to do a better job:

- Providing access to postsecondary education for Hispanic students.
- Improving outcomes for students of color.
- Keeping students in college until they have achieved their goal, since graduates have higher wages than those who do not finish.

During the year, SBCTC also focused on building campus-level assessment expertise, sharing best practices, and promoting faculty-driven strategies to improve student learning.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) continued to study the first-year, posthigh school experiences of 1995 graduates who completed vocational-technical education programs. This continued evaluation, along with the net impact and cost-benefit analyses of the program by WTECB, found that:

- Vocational-technical education completers were more actively involved in work and postsecondary education than noncompleters.

**GOALS FOR THE WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The Performance Management for Continuous Improvement framework established seven goals to guide improvements in the workforce training and education system. These goals are not static targets, but conditions that should be increasingly true for all people:

*Competencies:* Washington's workforce possesses the skills and abilities required in the workplace.

*Employment:* Washington's workforce finds employment opportunities.

*Earnings:* Washington's workforce achieves a family-wage standard of living from earned income.

*Productivity:* Washington's workforce is productive.

*Reduced Poverty:* Washington's workforce lives above poverty.

*Customer Satisfaction:* Workforce development participants and their employers are satisfied with workforce development services and results.

*Return on Investment:* Workforce development programs provide returns that exceed program costs.

- Secondary vocational-technical education is associated with a reduction in the percentage of individuals receiving social-welfare benefits.

- Student gains in earnings and employee benefits in the 18 months after high school were substantially greater than the cost of vocational-technical education to the public.

WTECB completed an evaluation of its Job Skills Program (JSP) (see Action 7), and a pilot evaluation of the private career schools. The JSP evaluation found that employers experienced increased productivity and sales as a result of JSP-funded training. Employers also said training contributed to workforce expansion or prevented layoffs and improved long-term retention of employees. The evaluation also showed that employees earned more after completing training.

The evaluation of eight private career schools showed participants were satisfied with the training they received, and employers were satisfied with the skills and productivity of new employees who received training at the schools. The evaluation was considered a pilot because of the limited number of participating schools. (Private career schools are independent businesses that provide occupational training. There are nearly 300 schools in Washington, 230 of which are licensed by WTECB; these schools provide training to about 41,000 people annually.)

## Reports for Consumers of Workforce Training

WTECB adopted the policy framework for reports on the programs and institutions of the workforce training and education system in May 1997. The consumer reports system will allow individuals to obtain information on the likely employment and earning outcomes for people similar to themselves when they pursue various training strategies (i.e., adult basic skills instruction coupled with vocational training at a community college nursing program). A pilot system is expected to be ready for testing in 1998, with full implementation via the Internet a year later. These reports will be a major service within the state's One-Stop Career Center system (see Action 2).

### *Workforce Training Results*

WTECB completed and published the second edition of *Workforce Training Results* in June 1997. This edition included outcome evaluations of the programs of the workforce training and education system for 1994–95 school year participants and added net impact and cost-benefit evaluations of the programs. The Board also began work on the third edition of *Workforce Training Results*. It will have updated outcome evaluations for 1995–96 school year participants and results of a new employer survey on training needs and satisfaction with new employees who completed one of the system's programs in 1996. Publication of the third edition is planned by the start of the 1998 Legislative Session.

## Analyzing Supply and Demand

WTECB began work on a new analysis of the gap between the supply and demand for workforce training. The analysis will examine the gap from the perspective of both employers and workers, and from the perspective of youth, adults, and adults with disadvantages. Publication of this analysis is planned by the start of the 1998 Legislative Session.

## Workforce Employment and Training Act Accountability

A net impact evaluation conducted for WTECB concluded that Employment and Training Trust Fund retraining programs at community and technical colleges increased long-term earnings for some dislocated workers, and increased the likelihood that dislocated workers received training in technical fields. (The trust fund was established in 1993 through ESHB 1988, the Workforce Employment and Training Act, to meet the educational and career needs of dislocated and other unemployed workers. The program is now called the Worker Retraining Program by SBCTC.)

The evaluation, conducted by Westat, Inc., of Rockville, Maryland, found that impact of retraining depended on the types of courses a dislocated worker took. Workers who take science and math courses and courses in fields, such as health care, technical trades (e.g., diesel mechanics), and technical professions (e.g., information technology) on average, have higher long-term earnings than dislocated workers who do not attend a community college. The evaluation also found that dislocated workers who attended other types of courses, such as developmental or remedial education, humanities, and vocational courses in sales or service occupations, on the average, have lower long-term earnings than dislocated workers who do not attend a community college.

SBCTC conducted its third annual evaluation of worker retraining programs funded by the Employment and Training Trust Fund. This evaluation, and the net impact study, found the program to be generally successful in returning dislocated workers to high-wage employment. SBCTC will publish its fourth annual report in December 1997.

## Data Standards

In May 1997, WTECB adopted standards for common data collection and maintenance for the programs and agencies of the workforce training and education system. The standards will facilitate matching of data collected from a variety of systems and make evaluations of the workforce training and education programs more consistent. An interagency technical workgroup developed the standards.

## Performance-Based Funding

At the direction of the Legislature, SBCTC will withhold 1 percent of the colleges' base budget for performance funding during the 1997–98 school year. Withheld funds will be released to colleges when they demonstrate improvement in areas, such as wages of former vocational preparation students and student success in core English and mathematics classes.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 2: Increase Capacity of the Workforce Training and Education System

### The Needed Action

***In order to match labor market demand, the capacity of the workforce training and education system must increase. Within two years, the supply of workforce training at community and technical colleges should increase by 4,050 student FTEs.*** *Within two years, the workforce development system must be implementing its One-Stop Career Center system. And within two years, the state must increase its support for school-to-work transition to assure greater capacity for work-related learning in the K–12 system.*

### Expanding Vocational Preparation in Community and Technical Colleges

Based on its analysis of supply and demand of workforce training, WTECB was an advocate for expansion of vocational preparation slots in the state's community and technical college system during the 1997 Legislature.

Community and technical colleges added 950 vocational preparation slots for the 1996–97 school year after receiving additional funding from the Legislature.

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### Worker Retraining Program (ESHB 1988)

The community and technical college system served more than 24,000 laid-off workers, and private career schools served 723 laid-off workers since the Employment and Training Trust Fund was created by the Legislature in 1993. To continue the program through June 1999, the Legislature appropriated $57.7 million in unemployment trust funds and state general funds. About 6,200 slots for dislocated workers will be provided during the 1997–98 year; 550 slots will be provided through private career schools, and the rest through the community and technical college system.

The 1997–99 biennial budget requires the college system to spend funds under the terms of the original legislation. Student support such as financial aid, child care, and transportation will remain a priority, as will maintaining job placement centers at colleges. Students can attend retraining programs offered by private career schools if desired courses of study are not offered by a college within their congressional district. SBCTC and its Worker Retraining Program Advisory Council have established plans for the revised program.

### Collocation of Job Placement Centers

The Employment Security Department received $2.4 million from the Worker Retraining Program to provide job placement centers at 29 community and technical colleges. The centers help students find part-time jobs while in

school, help newly trained or retrained workers find jobs, and give employers access to a pool of potential employees. Since 1993, more than 17,000 individuals used these on-campus centers, with about 4,000 getting a job.

In the coming year, centers will be open on each of the 32 community and technical college campuses, and a plan for enhancing services for dislocated workers will be developed in cooperation with JTPA Service Delivery Areas.

## One-Stop Career Center System

The Employment Security Department received a three-year, $9.65 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for implementing a One-Stop Career Center system in Washington State. Interagency groups are developing standards for the system. When implemented, One-Stop will reduce fragmentation of labor market services and use technology to enable universal service.

During the past year, work focused on identifying current technology resources and gaps, since the One-Stop system will capitalize on technology to improve and expand services. Nine local partnerships received One-Stop funds and engaged in a variety of activities: preparing common intake forms; establishing formal written agreements among all of the local One-Stop partners; expanding self-service sites; and completing business plans.

In the coming year, the One-Stop Executive Policy Council will further define the initiative's goals and objectives, establish policy for distributing funds, and specify expected outcomes for local partnerships. By June 1998, six full-service Career Development Centers (the name for One-Stop centers) will be operating. Also, each local partnership will identify other service providers to work with the centers and identify locations for self-service access.

## Labor Market Information and System Enhancements

The Employment Security Department made improvements to allow employers and job seekers to connect more efficiently. The Washington On-line Reemployment Kiosk (WORK) on the Internet allows job seekers to electronically apply for work and receive on-line job search assistance, and it allows employers to review resumes. A toll-free phone number and the state's interactive kiosks also provide self-service access to labor exchange services.

In November 1997, the department will expand the labor market information it provides through a new system called Washington Interactive Labor Market Access or WILMA. The system will be available both on the Internet and through a program that runs on desktop computers. It will allow employers, job seekers, job counselors, economic analysts, and others to obtain the latest information on availability of jobs and workers, wages, and education and training requirements and programs for hundreds of occupations.



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## Expanding Opportunities

Federal Carl Perkins vocational-technical education funds expanded School-to-Work Transition experiences and increased opportunities for technical training at high schools, skills centers, and community and technical colleges. The state receives $20 million in Carl Perkins funds annually. Use of these funds to expand opportunities will continue in the coming year.

## Regions

WTECB identified and adopted geographic regions to guide development of coordinated, regional workforce development initiatives, specifically School-to-Work Transition and One-Stop Career Centers. The regions, identified with the help of state and local partners, provide a target for the formation of regional workforce alliances. Ultimately, such alliances will enable communities to develop strategic plans to meet their unique economic and demographic workforce development needs.

## Training for New Vocational Educators

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board continued to support competency-based training for entry-level business education teachers at Central Washington University's training center at SeaTac. The center focuses on integration of academic and vocational courses, with an emphasis on preparing teachers to incorporate work-based learning strategies in their curriculum.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 3: Implement School-to-Work Transition

### The Needed Action

***School-to-Work Transition partners must continue their scheduled work to implement a system that will improve the movement of students to post-secondary training and to employment in careers of their choice—and back again, as needed.*** *In particular, in the next two years, School-to-Work Transition partners will work with the State Board of Education as they define what follows the Certificate of Mastery.*

**WHAT IS SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION?**

School-to-Work Transition is a strategy that brings educators, students, and the community together to help young people move smoothly from their classrooms to their careers. It is designed to provide young people with a strong academic foundation an opportunity to apply their knowledge in real-life situations, and help in fulfilling their career ambitions. School-to-Work Transition is a key part of the education reform initiative now taking place in Washington State.

School-to-Work Transition initiatives are locally driven and community based. Each initiative typically has three elements:

**School-Based Learning** is classroom instruction that integrates high academic standards with technical learning;

**Work-Based Learning** is experience at job sites that allows students to observe or study subject matter with adults in a hands-on, work-based environment; and

**Connecting Activities** provide program coordination and support for students, schools, and employers in such areas as career counseling, postsecondary education, and job placements.

### Community Partnerships

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction provided more than $6 million in state and federal funds to help local partnerships around the state begin School-to-Work Transition initiatives. Through consortia or individual grants, about 200 of the state's 296 school districts participated. During the 1997–98 school year, OSPI will provide $3.2 million in federal funds to local partnerships through regional consortia to continue building local initiatives.

### Regional Coordination

The Governor's School-to-Work Transition Task Force adopted a policy on regional coordination of School-to-Work Transition. The policy requires formation of multi-district consortia to provide more efficient distribution and use of state and federal grant funds, and to expand connections to private sector partners.

### Certificate of Mastery

An ad hoc committee provided the Commission on Student Learning with recommendations on the Certificate of Mastery, and how the certificate fits into high school graduation requirements. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board member Joe Pinzone represented the business community on the committee. During the summer of 1997, the Commission forwarded its recommendation to the State Board of Education in preparation for a decision by the Board on the Certificate in the fall of 1997.

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In September 1997, WTECB reviewed and adopted a position paper on private sector expectations for the Certificate of Mastery. The private sector wants the Certificate and what it represents:

- To be universally understood, identical across school districts, appropriate for all students, and easy to use;
- To include work-related competencies;
- To provide core information about a student; and
- To efficiently fit into the education system that follows.

## Evaluating Results

WTECB began work on a multiyear evaluation of the School-to-Work Transition initiative. The evaluation will focus on whether 1996 and 1999 high school graduates who participated in School-to-Work Transition activities are more likely to graduate, go on to postsecondary education, or to have higher quality jobs if they choose to go directly to work. Initial results for the class of 1996 will be available in late 1997 or early 1998.

Additionally, in May 1997, WTECB adopted measurable goals and indicators for an accountability system for School-to-Work Transition. The goals and indicators also align with those previously adopted for the state's workforce training and education system under the Performance Management for Continuous Improvement framework (see Action 1).

## Work-Based Learning Grants

In January 1997, WTECB provided $79,787 in grants to seven work-based learning projects in Port Angeles, Walla Walla, Bainbridge Island, Seattle, and the Spokane area. The projects gave students hands-on experience that connected what they learned in class with work-based settings outside school. They also provided a model for expanding work-based learning to other employers, unions, and industries. A second round is planned for the 1997–98 school year.

SBCTC and WTECB continued participation in a three-state consortium producing prototype, portable skill certificates for entry-level occupations in retail and financial services. Employers in Washington, Oregon, and California will validate and accept the certificates. The project involves education agencies, businesses, and business organizations from each state.

In the coming year, pilot projects will develop an assessment process for the skill standards. The assessment projects align skill standards closely with education reform goals.

## Supporting School-to-Work Transition Through Tech Prep

SBCTC provided federal Tech Prep funding to 22 local consortia. Tech Prep programs prepare students for careers in midlevel technology occupations, such as engineering technology, applied science, mechanical, industrial trades, agriculture, health, and business. During the 1995–96 school year (data from the

### *Public Supports Skill Standards*

*SBCTC and industry representatives completed industry-based skill standards for six occupations in information technology. During the year, this work expanded to include occupations in 11 additional clusters—oral health, cosmetology, manufacturing, food processing, wood products, natural resources, agriculture, child care provider, chiropractic technician, network technician, and retail and financial services.*

### *Public Supports the Elements of School-to-Work Transition*

*In a December 1996 survey by Elway Research, the public was asked its opinion of an education system that would "provide a strong academic foundation for every student, give every student hands-on learning experience, and provide an opportunity for every student to practice what they have learned in a work-based setting." Respondents found this education system to be:*

- ▶ *Highly Desirable - 56%*
- ▶ *Highly Undesirable - 0%*
- ▶ *Undesirable - 3%*
- ▶ *Desirable - 40%*

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1996–97 school year are still being processed), 11,889 students enrolled in Tech Prep programs. All consortia have signed articulation agreements with two- and four-year institutions, allowing colleges to accept for credit certain courses that are part of the Tech Prep sequence.

During 1997–98, SBCTC will review Tech Prep program effectiveness and examine alternative funding. Activities include:

- Developing stronger communications with parents in the areas of career planning and financial aid for teens;
- Beginning development of a statewide articulation infrastructure;
- Continuing development of skill standards for critical and emerging industries in the state;
- Developing the framework for the school-based element of work-based learning opportunities; and
- Strengthening Tech Prep and integrating it into the School-to-Work Transition system.

## Career Preparation Standards

WTECB began research to define the skills employers want that could be addressed in the state's K–12 education system. These are basic skills that individuals must have to succeed in any career field. Defining these skills will facilitate decision-making on education reform issues, such as the elements of the post-Certificate of Mastery experience for high school students.

## Public Awareness

WTECB completed research on public awareness of workforce development issues generally, and desire and attitudes toward improving students' transition from high school to further education and employment. The research found high public acceptance of elements of School-to-Work Transition, but low awareness of local initiatives. The Board partnered with the Washington State Parent-Teacher Association to begin outreach efforts to parents and developed a variety of written material for local partnerships, PTA, and other organizations. Some materials will be translated into Spanish, Russian, Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean for the 1997–98 school year. WTECB also began promoting awareness of School-to-Work Transition through a partnership with the KING-TV (Seattle) "Education in Action" public affairs campaign.

## Integration

OSPI worked with the Commission on Student Learning and other partners to ensure School-to-Work Transition will be integrated into the Essential Academic Learning Requirements. This work will continue in the coming year. OSPI will distribute and provide training on computer software to facilitate this integration; distribution will be through the agency's Internet website. A teacher from Everett developed the software.



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## Teacher Preparation

OSPI provided grants of $47,500 each to the University of Washington, Central Washington University, and Western Washington University to revise teacher preparation models to support education reform goals, including applied and work-based learning.

## Curriculum Development

OSPI continued to participate in a national consortium led by the Center for Occupational Research Development to develop core competencies for high school career clusters. The first three clusters are engineering, manufacturing, and business marketing and management. Three school districts in the state are participating in a two-year test of the clusters—West Valley-Spokane, Seattle, and North Mason. The districts devoted the first year to planning and preparing curriculum; in the coming year, they will implement the career clusters.

OSPI also restructured its Learning and Teaching unit into three centers to improve how it addresses curriculum applications, research, program development and dissemination, and capacity building. The goal is to improve technical assistance to schools. In the coming year, the Center for Curriculum Application will focus on building a curriculum framework for education goals 3 and 4, training center staff at OSPI, and training to build local capacity. One of the center's three-year objectives is building a student career guidance system.

OSPI helped both urban and rural school districts establish REAL (Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning) programs. Under REAL, students obtain hands-on experience and work-related skills through student-run, school-based enterprises. Thirty-eight educators received training in this curriculum.

The state also participated in a national pilot of mini-REAL curriculum that provides hands-on experiences to elementary and middle school students. Work will continue in the coming year to design programs and materials based on the pilot.

The state continued participating in the national Vanguard project, which trains educators in restructuring academic and vocational curriculum to support all students, including those whose first language is not English and those at risk of failure. OSPI provided funds to involve an additional 20 school districts (staff from 70 districts received training to date) and to show-case best practices in teacher preparation and professional development. In the coming year, OSPI will continue involvement in Vanguard and develop and disseminate curriculum guidelines that support School-to-Work Transition.

A statewide committee of teachers from

**THE STATE'S FOUR GOALS FOR EDUCATION**

The goals require students to:

**Goal 1** - Read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings;

**Goal 2** - Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics, social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history; geography; arts, and health and fitness;

**Goal 3** - Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and integrate experience and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and

**Goal 4** - Understand the importance of work and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect career and educational opportunities.

vocational and academic disciplines developed a first draft of computer technology standards. The goals of the standards are to enhance essential academic learning requirements, and to improve the preparation of students for post-secondary and employment opportunities.

Finally, a partnership of the Washington State Labor Council, Carpenters' Union, Renton School District, Renton Technical College, and OSPI developed a pilot pre-apprenticeship program for youth. The program exposes students to a variety of skilled trades and provides them with an expedited path into an apprenticeship program. Since January 1997, it has served about 100 students and is open to all students in King County.

## Student Assessment Systems

Making connections between new essential academic learning requirements and skill standards is a major challenge in creating better structured paths from high school to further education and/or employment. This work has just begun. The Commission on Student Learning continued developing assessments for the essential academic learning requirements. OSPI, SBCTC, and other School-to-Work Transition partners began preparing educators to deliver skill standards competencies and to connect the assessment of student competencies with the assessment of essential academic learning requirements and the Certificate of Mastery.

## Serving All Students

The All Students/Special Populations workgroup developed a tool to help educators know whether all students are being served by their School-to-Work Transition initiative. OSPI will use the grant process and monitoring to ensure that districts develop School-to-Work Transition systems that serve all students. OSPI will also prepare materials that teach equity-related competencies to students, expand the network for serving at-risk youth, and disseminate information on best practices.

OSPI continued to help local districts establish Jobs for America's Graduates/ Jobs for Washington's Graduates programs. The program emphasizes basic skills and career skills development to get youth back on track toward high school graduation or a GED. It targets dropouts and students at risk of dropping out. Partnerships with local employers help place graduating students in jobs with opportunities for advancement. Last year's effort included strengthening the network of job specialists involved with local programs. Of the 25 programs in place, 10 are for out-of-school youth. These programs served about 1,900 students during the 1996–97 school year. About $100,000 in state and federal funds supported this work last year.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 4: Vertically Integrate the Workforce Training and Education System

### The Needed Action

***WTECB must lead the effort to ensure that all elements of the workforce training and education system are vertically integrated.*** *Within the next two years, School-to-Work Transition partners in the K-12 system, those working to assure effective welfare-to-work transitions, those providing adult basic skills training, and the JTPA system should have established clear linkages with post-secondary education and training.*

### Revised College Admission Standards

The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board continues to support the Higher Education Coordinating Board's effort to revise admission standards for the state's colleges and universities. When complete, admission standards will consider the new student assessment process, Certificate of Mastery, and high school graduation requirements being developed under the education reform initiative.

### Work-Based Learning Guide

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges developed and distributed *A Guide to Work-Based Learning* to help K–16 educators make the connection between their classroom instruction and the job site. SBCTC trained educators on methods for connecting to industry and integrating skill standards and work-based learning into the classroom and prepared materials so worksite supervisors could understand their role in a student's educational experience. In the coming year, work will continue to connect current activities to education reforms' four learning goals.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 5: Increase Public Awareness of Workforce Training and Education Issues and Initiatives

### The Needed Action

***WTECB must continue its work to increase public awareness about the importance of workforce training and education initiatives.*** *Within two years, WTECB will have completed an initial public awareness effort to increase public understanding and support for the goals and strategies of this plan.*

The Workforce Training and Educating Coordination Board continued its work to increase public awareness of the importance of workforce training and education and of workforce training and education initiatives. The Board completed research on the public's awareness and attitudes on workforce development and School-to-Work Transition initiative and distributed two major publications: *High Skills, High Wages: Washington's Comprehensive Plan for Workforce Training and Education*; and *Workforce Development Directory 1997*, which provides a synopsis of all workforce training and education programs in Washington State.

Additionally, WTECB published evaluations of the worker retraining programs funded by the Employment and Training Trust Fund (ESHB 1988), private career schools and its Job Skills Program; and its annual progress report to the Legislature on the state's comprehensive plan for workforce training and education. Distribution of the agency's evaluations informs policymakers and the public of the results of the workforce training system.

The Board expanded its Internet home page, making more information accessible about the agency and workforce training system programs and initiatives. The site provides information on upcoming Board meetings, text of significant publications, and a way for the public to contact the agency and order documents through electronic mail. The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges also developed an Internet home page to provide college students and staff with current information on college system initiatives and programs.

WTECB worked with the news media to publicize its initiatives. TVW, the state's public affairs network, broadcast several Board meetings to a statewide audience.

To assist with its School-to-Work Transition communications responsibilities, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board continued working with a public-private advisory group chaired by Board member Dick Spangler. The Board also developed a variety of materials that local partnerships could use to promote their

School-to-Work Transition initiatives. During the upcoming year, WTECB will translate key School-to-Work Transition information materials into seven languages for the state's ethnic communities, continue to assist the PTA in its advocacy of the initiative, and expand its efforts to support the communication needs of local partnerships building School-to-Work Transition initiatives.

During the coming year, the state's community and technical colleges will work with school districts, business leaders, the PTA, and four-year colleges to prepare information to help parents guide their students in decisions related to postsecondary education and their career. This effort will include:

- Developing regional occupational outlook materials, and making information available to local high schools;
- Developing and conducting a career planning seminar for parents, counselors, educators, and students;
- Producing and distributing information on the benefits of career planning and technical education;
- Providing parents with steps they can take to reduce costs and the risk of students dropping out of college;
- Promoting technical education within the K–20 community; and
- Promoting articulation between high schools, two- and four-year institutions.

**THE PUBLIC AND WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

*Elway Research randomly contacted 796 adults throughout the state in December 1996 for the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board. The following are some key findings from the survey:*

- 76% of respondents had taken training to upgrade their skills; 64% did so to keep up with their current job, and 36% took training to get a better job.
- 75% said they would have to upgrade their skills in the future to keep up with changes in their job.
- 55% attended training after hours.
- 42% expect employer to provide training if their job requires additional skills and knowledge.
- Where do people find worker training programs?
  - 45% said local schools and colleges.
  - 34% said unemployment office or agency.
- 47% who want skills for a new job would obtain training at a community or technical college.
- Unemployed respondents (15% of total):
  - 78% were **not** taking training to help them regain employment.
  - 70% were **not** taking training to obtain new skills to change occupations.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 6: Make Welfare Reform Work

### The Needed Action

***Workforce training and education agencies and partners must make welfare reform work.*** *Within two years, these partners must develop programs that integrate basic skills and occupational skills training with work experience so that time-limited training for those on public assistance actually will enable them to become self-supporting.*

A subcabinet of state agencies developed an implementation plan for the first phase of welfare reform in Washington State. The subcabinet included the Employment Security Department, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Department of Social and Health Services, and the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. The reform initiative, called WorkFirst, began August 1, 1997.

### Employment Security Department

The Employment Security Department will help WorkFirst clients become employed as quickly as possible, help them retain jobs, and help them move toward economic independence. The department will receive $31 million to help implement WorkFirst during fiscal 1998, which began July 1, 1997.

Clients will use an automated system to input information on work they are seeking, their employer contacts, and other information. Once a client is working, training will be available on skills that will allow him or her to move beyond entry-level employment.

Job retention services will be important; the level of work maturity skills of most WorkFirst participants is expected to be low. Postemployment support will strengthen a client's connection with the working world and the client toward economic independence. Retention services will help clients develop skills to deal with personal issues, such as child care, transportation, and relationships in the workplace, so they retain employment.

Additionally, Employment Security and the JTPA Service Delivery Areas will determine how Private Industry Councils (PIC) can be linked with WorkFirst to create complementary services for clients. This connection will be facilitated by the recent federal budget, which will allocate about $18.7 million to PICs for welfare reform activities in 1998.

### Community and Technical College System Role in WorkFirst

Washington's community and technical colleges have provided basic education and job skills training to low income individuals since the system's inception. With the advent of welfare reform, the colleges recognized the need for programs that help individuals on public assistance move into employment and career ladders that result in family-wage occupations.



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In preparation for WorkFirst, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges:

- Tested training strategies to prepare welfare recipients for employment. These strategies include combining basic skills and job skills training, combining work experience with classroom training, increasing the intensity of training, adjusting curricula to become more work focused, and developing short job training programs for entry-level jobs;
- Added workplace competencies and expanded integration of work-based themes into basic skills instruction;
- Adopted a common assessment tool among basic skills providers and referral agencies to reduce duplication of testing and to overcome a client's perceived barriers to enrollment; and
- Worked with the Department of Social and Health Services to help clients with undiagnosed learning disabilities become better learners.

An evaluation will determine the effectiveness of these strategies.

During the next year, SBCTC will ensure each college is:

- Working with appropriate state and local agencies and employers to identify employment opportunities for WorkFirst clients;
- Identifying resources for short-term training programs to help clients gain skills they need for entry-level employment;
- Identifying certificate programs and developing systems to help people with low incomes gain training that will lead to family-wage occupations and career ladders;
- Expanding opportunities for short-term training by building upon best practices from around the nation and from lessons learned in pilot projects; and
- Expanding opportunities for work-based learning, and combining work experience with basic skills education, English-as-a-Second Language, and vocational education.

## Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction worked with the Department of Social and Health Services and the Department of Health to identify factors to enhance school completion and work readiness of students receiving public assistance. Teen parents must be attending school or working toward a GED to be eligible for cash assistance. OSPI will work with school districts and others to provide adequate education opportunities for teen parents.

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## *Progress and Plans*

# Action 7: Connect Workforce Training and Education With Economic Development

### The Needed Action

***Workforce training and education partners must ensure firm connection between their work and economic development.***
*In the next two years, economic development and workforce training programs should work together to establish and implement policies that target firms applying high performance work practices - practices that enhance and engage the skills and decision-making capability of workers.*

### Job Skills Program

WTECB's Job Skills Program (JSP) fostered economic development by providing training opportunities to more than 2,200 individuals through matching grants to business-education partnerships. Seventeen training projects around the state were funded by the program. For every JSP grant dollar, the private sector invested about $4. Local and state economic development agencies use JSP as an incentive to recruit companies to locate or expand their operations in Washington. The program helps fund training for new employees in demand occupations, retraining for current workers facing dislocation, or upgrade training for current workers to enhance their productivity. The program targets areas of the state with high unemployment or a high concentration of economically disadvantaged people.

### Manufacturing Extension Service

Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS) helps small manufacturers meet challenges imposed by rapid technological change and global competition by brokering customized training, providing technology transfer, and providing business services. In its first year, WMS hired a president and placed field staff at community colleges in Spokane; Yakima; Seattle; Everett; Tacoma; and the Evergreen Partnership, an industry association for secondary wood products manufacturers. WMS staff works with small manufacturers to assess their need to modernize, improve the productivity of their physical plant and their staff, and establish quality improvement initiatives.

A partnership involving the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the state's research universities, and the private sector obtained $950,000 in federal money for the first year of WMS; these partners provided matching funds. WTECB committed $200,000 in JSP funding for customized training during the first four years of the project.

### Informal Learning—"The Teaching Firm" Project

WTECB organized a state partnership to participate in a three-year national research and demonstration study of informal workplace learning.The Educational Development Center of Boston, Massachusetts, is conducting a study called "The Teaching Firm." Initial research suggests that much

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of the skills and knowledge employees need to be successful on the job are learned in informal ways, e.g., outside of classroom settings. This project is expected to provide Washington's employers, educators, economic development professionals, and policymakers with practical recommendations to foster informal learning opportunities and prepare people to work in high-performance environments.

During the first year of project "in-plant," research was conducted in each state. The Boeing Company was studied here. During the next two years of the project, Washington will receive technical assistance in instituting the best practices of informal teaching and learning.

Washington State partners are the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Employment Security Department, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development. Five states, including Washington, are participating in the project. Nationally, the Pew Charitable Trust and the U.S. Department of Labor are providing significant financial support.

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## CONCLUSION

*The work set out in "High Skills, High Wages" is ambitious, difficult, and urgent. It is the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board's best sense of the changes in our workforce training and education system that will bring the greatest benefit to Washington's employers, workers, and students. The realities of a global economy press us to be flexible and results oriented. Public-private initiatives are emerging more than ever since our mutual interdependency is becoming more obvious. Effective schools do not operate independently of their communities. The K–12 system must connect smoothly to higher education. Vocational preparation programs must be planned and implemented with employees' real skill needs in mind. The best employers realize that their competitive success depends on highly-skilled employees, and they respond by investing in their workers.*

*Changes in the way we do business are not made overnight. They require many people from a variety of sectors working with shared goals in mind.*

*This report outlines the progress we have made. It also recognizes we have much work ahead.*

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